

PREFACE

Phoneticians and phonemicists are in this country generally unaware of the fact that a kind of scientific observation of the sounds, linguistic and non-linguistic as well, was already undertaken in the West of ancient times. One of the followers of Aristotle, — not the great Master himself, perhaps, — wrote, shortly after him, a succinct but important article on the ‘Audibilia’ (“From the Observation on Things Audible”, Ἐκ τοῦ περὶ ἀκουστών).

‘All voices and sounds (noises, φόφοι) come to pass either when the bodies or when the air falls on bodies. It is not because of the air taking on shape as some opine, but because of its being moved in the similar way as bodies are, by the air’s wrapping itself up, by its extending itself, by its repressing itself, still also by its being brought into collision with each other owing to the blows of the breath and of the musical strings. For when the breath that falls on the air strikes the air one blow after another (ἐφεξῆς), the air is forthwith moved by violence, pushing forward the air clinging next to it in the very same manner, so that the same sound stretches in all directions so long as the moving of the air takes place’ (800a).

He not only knew that the sounds could acoustically be interpreted in terms of something like the waves of the air (‘pushing forward the air clinging next to it [the air] in the very same manner’), but also that (801a) a sound from afar was felt fainter owing to more interruption worked upon it on its way than the ones quite nearby, exactly in the same way as the light(-waves) from afar were fainter than the near ones. He was a man of rather modern (as an intellectual classic generally was) and empirical mind, knew the ‘law of observation’ as a Peripatetician; only did he not treat there, in his treatise above, the so-called ‘Einzellaute’ (στοιχεῖα)¹⁾ one by one nor the ‘gesamte Satzlautung’ at large, though (*sic*) he could have surely done it well, had he had a try at it: for we have elsewhere, still extant, several promising germs of treating them in these olden times. When Cicero wrote (*De off.* I, 133): ‘Nihil fuit in Catulis, ut eos exquisito iudicio putares uti litterarum, quamquam erant litterati; sed et alii; hi autem optime uti lingua putabantur’, he meant by the word ‘litterarum’ clearly, I think, the στοιχεῖα, not the ‘literary culture’ of both the Catuli as has long been interpreted ordinarily by most scholars by now.

Empirical as they were, observations of sounds of those olden times were generally still

¹⁾ which, in this case, were different from the γράμματα. cf. ἵστοκεῖον ἔστι φωνῆ ἀδιάφρετος. (*Arist. Poet.* 1456^b 22).

simple, — sometimes even vague, we might say. But it was this trend of empirical observation to which clinged, and on which has been based and developed in the main our phonetic observations through many centuries down to the latest times. We have continually been investigating phonetic phenomena on this type of empirical principles, generally to clarify our consciousness of speech activities, to gain more accurate knowledge of articulation, or mainly to facilitate the acquisition, to understand the status, of foreign phones and supra-phones. However, the problems of the communication, in general, were not yet attached so much importance to, as was already from a little before among acoustical scientists.

The importance of the communication problems has now become enormous. Awareness of this importance and the progress in electronics broke a new ground for phonetic researches: electronics in its application to communication technique under its influence, proceeding now on its novel way, psychology of linguistic and communicative activities winning new objectivity and accuracy, more over the procedures of medical cure of the audio-phonational diseases being ameliorated here in a wide measure by means of the recent sound-visualizing and counting apparatuses, — all revealing out serious endeavor to understand the importance, to elucidate the problems, of the communication by speech in the modern and wider sense of the word. However the future of them all are quite open, of course.

With the purpose of answering these our problems of importance, the members of the Departments of Oto-rhino-laryngology, Electronics, Linguistics, Psychology and the Departments of various foreign languages have organized here in 1955 the Institution for Phonetic Sciences which we expect, sometime in the near future, to be enlarged and solidified as a General Institute of Linguistic Sciences.

The present volume is the first issue of the Report of the Institution with which we feel heartily happy to greet our honored predecessors and estimated fellow-researchers.

Kyoto, July 1961.

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